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OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

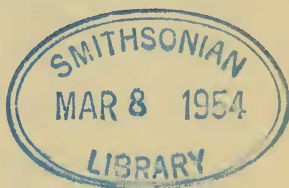
Edited by

FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.
Secretary to the Commission

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OPINION 195

Designation, under the Plenary Powers, of a type species for the genus *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Pelecypoda) in harmony with accustomed usage



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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

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OPINION 195

DESIGNATION, UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS, OF A TYPE SPECIES FOR THE GENUS "VENUS" LINNAEUS, 1758 (CLASS PELECYPODA) IN HARMONY WITH ACCUSTOMED USAGE

RULING :—(1) Under the Plenary Powers all selections of type species for the genus *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Pelecypoda) made prior to the present Ruling are hereby set aside and *Venus verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758, is hereby designated to be the type species of the foregoing nominal genus. (2) The name *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 (gender of name: feminine), with the type species designated in (1) above, is hereby placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* as Name No. 626. (3) The specific name *verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Venus verrucosa*, is hereby placed on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* as Name No. 1.

I.—THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On 23rd May 1945 the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature received from Dr. Joshua L. Baily, Jr. (*Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, U.S.A.*) a letter dated 6th April 1945, in which Dr. Baily raised two questions, the first concerned with the type species of the genus *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Pelecypoda), the second with the type species of the genus *Bulla* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Gastropoda). These two problems were given separate Registered Numbers, the first being assigned the Number Z.N.(S.)189, the second the Number Z.N.(S.)190. Thereafter these two problems were treated as constituting separate applications. The following is an extract from that part of Dr. Baily's letter which is concerned with the name *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 :—

Please give me the benefit of your assistance on the following cases.

1. *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758

According to Stewart (1930, *Spec. Publ. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.*, No. 3) the earliest type designation for this genus was *Venus dione* Linnaeus. In the 10th edition of the *Systema Naturae*, Rumphius is quoted as having designated this species as "die rechte Venus", etc. and later Müller and also Chemnitz both referred to it as "die aechte Venus", and throughout the 18th century this usage was consistently followed. But in 1799 Lamarck (*Mém. Soc. Hist. nat. Paris* 1799 : 84) cited *Venus mercenaria* Linnaeus as an example, and in 1801 (*Syst. Anim. s. Vert.*) he cited *Venus verrucosa* Linnaeus. These two species differ widely from *Venus dione*, but they are fairly closely related to each other.

Neither of these citations by Lamarck can be considered a type designation, but so great was the weight of Lamarck's authority that the earlier designation of *Venus dione* has been completely neglected by all subsequent writers. Today the family VENERIDAE is divided up into several sub-families, and the name *Venus* is universally applied to a group of species of a different sub-family from that to which *Venus dione* belongs. To restore the name *Venus* to the group typified by *Venus dione* would result in so much confusion that no systematic malacologist would recommend such a step, so far as I know.

If the original designation of *Venus dione* as type should be invalidated by the International Commission, the question will then arise as to what species of *Venus* is the type. The next valid designation was by Gray, 1847 (*Proc. zool. Soc. Lond.*, 1847 : 183) who chose *Venus verrucosa*. In the meantime, several other types have been designated, but according to Stewart (*loc. cit.* : 217) these designations are all invalid. Finally, in 1886 Fischer (*Man. de Conchyl.*) designated *Venus mercenaria*, and this usage was followed by Dall (*Trans. Wagner Free Inst. Sci.* 3 (pt. 6) : 1306) in 1903. Most writers have followed Dall, except that Stewart (*loc. cit.* : 216) and Grant and Gale (*Mem. San Diego Soc. nat. Hist.* 1 : 316) in 1931 have used *Venus verrucosa* on the ground that Gray's designation was older than Fischer's. If these two species alone were involved there would be no question as to the priority of *Venus verrucosa* as type, but as the designations of both of them were subsequent to the older one of *Venus dione*, neither *Venus verrucosa*, nor *Venus mercenaria* can be established as type without the plenary suspension of the Rules by the International Commission. Of the two my own personal preference would be for *Venus mercenaria*, for the following reason :

In 1811 Megerle established the genus *Chione*. The type of this group was designated by Gray (*loc. cit.*) as *Venus dysira* Chemnitz = *Venus cancellata* Linnaeus, 1767 (*Syst. Nat.* (12th ed.) 1 : 1191). No one has ever questioned either this genus or its type designation. It is probably the largest genus (in the number of its species) in the family. It is universally distributed. In many localities several species are found living together. But the type species, *Chione*

cancellata so closely resembles *Venus verrucosa* that they are probably not more than sectionally distinct, and if *Venus verrucosa* be constituted the type of *Venus*, that name must be used for the multiplicity of species now called *Chione*.

On the other hand *Venus mercenaria* is well suited to be a type. It is widespread, it is very plentiful, and probably the largest species of the family. It is the basis of clam chowder, for which reason it is widely known even among those who are not trained malacologists.

In view of the foregoing data, I would request that you exercise your Plenary Powers of suspending the Rules to declare the designation of *Venus dione* as type *Venus* invalid, and that you designate in place thereof either *Venus verrucosa* or *Venus mercenaria*, as may seem best to you.

II.—THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

2. On receipt of the present application, Mr. Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, consulted the late Mr. R. Winckworth (*London*) who, on 15th December 1945, replied as follows, strongly supporting the acceptance of *Venus verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758, as the type species of the genus *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 :—

Venus Linnaeus, 1758 ; Linnaeus does not quote the words “ die achte Venusmuschel ” but merely gives the reference to Rumph’s figure as “ Rumph. mus. t.48.f.4 ”. If however this be considered sufficient to make *Venus dione* Linnaeus the type species of *Venus* Linnaeus, the resulting confusion in the nomenclature of the VENERIDAE would be very great. Equally disastrous would be the choice of *Venus erycina* Linnaeus as type species by tautonymy : *Erycina* was a name of *Venus* under which she was worshipped at Rome.

I should strongly support taking the first valid type selection, namely that of *Venus verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758, made by Gray (1847), which has been widely accepted.

3. On 14th November 1947 notice of the possible use, by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, of the Plenary Powers in the present case was issued to the serial publications prescribed by the Ninth International Congress of Zoology, Monaco, 1913. The publication of this notice elicited no objections to the action proposed.

III.—THE DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

4. The present application was considered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature at the Eleventh Meeting of its Paris Session held at the Sorbonne in the Amphithéâtre Louis-Liard on Monday, 26th July 1948 at 0930 hours. The following is an extract from the Official Record of the Proceedings of the International Commission setting out the decision reached by it in regard to this case at the foregoing meeting (Paris Session, 11th Meeting, Conclusion 28) (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 304—305) :—

THE COMMISSION agreed :—

- (1) to use their plenary powers to set aside all selections of the type species of the genus *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Pelecypoda, Order Eulamellibranchia), made prior to the present decision and to designate *Venus verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758, to be the type species of this genus ;
- (2) to place the generic name *Venus* Linnaeus, 1758 (type species : *Venus verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758), on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* ;
- (3) to place the specific trivial name *verrucosa* Linnaeus, 1758 (as published in the binominal combination *Venus verrucosa*), on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* ;
- (4) to render an *Opinion* setting out the decisions specified in (1) to (3) above.

5. The following are the original references for the names which appear in the decision set out in the immediately preceding paragraph :—

Venus Linnaeus, 1758, *Syst. Nat.* (ed.10) 1 : 684

Verrucosa, *Venus*, Linnaeus, 1758, *ibid.* (ed.10) 1 : 685

6. The decision taken in the present case was reported to, and approved by, the Section on Nomenclature of the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, at its Third Meeting held on 26th July 1948 (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 5 : 94).

7. The Ruling given in the present *Opinion* was concurred in by the sixteen (16) Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners present at the Paris Session of the International Commission, namely :—

Beltrán *vice* Cabrera ; Boschma ; Bradley ; di Caporiacco ; Hemming ; Hindle *vice* Jordan ; Jorge *vice* do Amaral ; Kirby *vice* Stoll ; Lemche *vice* Dymond ; Mansour *vice* Hankó ; Metcalf *vice* Peters ; Riley *vice* Calman ; Rode ; Spärck *vice* Mortensen ; van Straelen *vice* Richter ; Usinger *vice* Vokes.

8. The Ruling given in the present *Opinion* was dissented from by no Commissioner or Alternate Commissioner present at the Paris Session.

9. At the time of the adoption of the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*, the expression prescribed for the second portion of the binomen which constitutes the scientific name of a species was the expression "trivial name" and the *Official List* reserved for recording such names was styled the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*. Under a decision taken by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, the expression "specific name" was substituted for the expression "trivial name" and corresponding changes were made in the titles of the *Official List* and the *Official Index* of such names (1953, *Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.* : 21). The changes in terminology so adopted have been incorporated in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*.

10. The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Opinion* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

11. The present *Opinion* shall be known as *Opinion One Hundred and Ninety-five (195)* of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London this Ninth day of November, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Three.

*Secretary to the International Commission
on Zoological Nomenclature*

FRANCIS HEMMING